Why? | Part 3

Lesson 9
Matthew 7:7-11; Mark 11:22-24; Acts 4:23-31;
2 Corinthians 12:1-10
January 21, 2024

Why Didn't God Answer My Prayer?

INTRODUCTION

This year our congregation lost a valued member to cancer. This young man battled this horrible disease with all his strength. He encouraged his church family to pray for not only his healing, but also for his strength and the strength of his family. And, his church family did pray continually for his healing, pain, and victory over this disease.

Those prayers, however, were not answered as we had asked. He lost his battle with cancer, and his biological family and church family were crushed. But that was not the end of the story. At his memorial service, just like in our scriptures this week, we saw the GRACE and the GLORY of God in every testimonial spoke by believers and non-believers alike. God had used this young man throughout his 45 years of life and his afflictions to minister the power and grace of Christ to everyone he had contact with. His story and the stories we will study this week will hopefully reveal to you there is no such thing as unanswered prayer.

Memory verse: "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

—2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?

1. Why are the disciples praying? There are three parts to this prayer. What are they? What was the result of their prayer? (Acts 4:23-31)

For what did Paul pray? What was God's reason for not answering his prayer as Paul had requested?
 (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

3. What are key words that can direct our prayer lives? (Matthew 7:7-8; Mark 11:22-24)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. Why does God not answer prayers in the way or timing we hope for? (2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 59:1-2; Hebrews 11:6; James 4:3)

2. What do you learn about prayer from the following verses? (Matthew 7:7-11; Mark 11:22-24; James 1:6-7)

3. The story of Lazarus gives us a vision into the reasons God does not always answer our prayers in the way or timing we want. Why didn't Jesus immediately go to Lazarus? (John 11:4-7, 14-15, 40)

4. How did witnessing the glory of God affect Lazarus, Mary, Martha, the Jewish people, and the Pharisees? (John 11:1-53)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. God calls us to pray with belief and without doubting (Mark 11:22-24). When we come to our Lord in prayer, he wants us to ASK, SEEK, KNOCK, BELIEVE, AND NOT DOUBT. He wants us to come with a believing, humble, pure, and trusting heart. Does this describe you and your prayer life? Share in the space below how these verses can transform your prayer life so it is a time of not just seeking God for what he can do for you, but to seek Him for who He is.

2. How do you handle what appears to be unanswered or delayed prayer responses? What can you learn from Paul's account (2 Corinthians 12:8-10) and the account of Lazarus (John 11) to strengthen your prayer life?